E 286
.L9
1855

=286
L9
1855

E 286
.L9
1855
Copy 1

...racter and Influence of American Civilization.

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE AUTHORITIES

OF THE

CITY OF LOWELL,

JULY 4th, 1855.

BY AUGUSTUS WOODBURY.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

LOWELL:
S. J. VARNEY, (27 CENTRAL STREET,) PRINTER.
1855.

The Character and Influence of American Civilization.

AN

ORATION

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE AUTHORITIES

OF THE

CITY OF LOWELL,

JULY 4th, 1855.

BY AUGUSTUS WOODBURY.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

LOWELL:
S. J. VARNEY, (27 CENTRAL STREET,) PRINTER.
1855.

E 286
.L9
1855

CORRESPONDENCE.

REV. AUGUSTUS WOODBURY,—

Dear Sir:—At a meeting of the Committee of Arrangements for the Municipal Celebration of the Fourth of July, holden Saturday evening, 7th instant, it was unanimously voted to instruct the Secretary to request of you a copy of your oration for publication.

Pursuant to said vote, I hereby cheerfully comply with its instructions. Hoping that you may be induced to grant the Committee the favor they so earnestly ask, I am, Sir,

Yours, very respectfully,

JAMES WATSON, *Secretary*
Committee of Arrangements.

LOWELL, JULY 9, 1855.

LOWELL, JULY 9, 1855.

My Dear Sir:—

I cordially accede to the request of your Committee, as conveyed to me so kindly in your note of this morning, and herewith transmit to you the manuscript which you desire. If its publication will conduce, in any way, to a better understanding of the principles on which American Liberty is based, and a truer appreciation of the value of American Institutions, the object of my efforts will be fully answered.

Very truly yours,

AUGUSTUS WOODBURY.

JAMES WATSON, ESQ., *Secretary of Committee of Arrangements for Municipal Celebration of July 4th.*

ORATION.

My Fellow Countrymen:—

There is a Providential design in National life. A Nationality, born with convulsive throes, it may be, has always a peaceful work to do. It is not by chance that peoples and empires start on their way. Providence decrees and Time obeys. God rules among all the inhabitants of the earth. He gives to each man and to each Nation, the peculiar task which belongs to him and to it. By the combined fidelity of each to the given work, is made up the sum of human welfare. And so it is, as I am glad to believe, that the events of History are the manifestations of the workings of great Providential plans for the accomplishment of human good. These events, some prominent, others humble, all important, have a character and an influence reaching far beyond themselves. Each is a link in one endless chain. Each has a peculiar history, stretching back into the eternal past, and forward into the eternal future.

To some events must belong a more decisive character and a more powerful influence, than to others. They serve as landmarks, by which the race knows the stages of its advancement. They show the rate

of progress, the distance already travelled over, the distance yet before the pilgrim — man. Around them cluster the affections, the hopes, the everlasting and undying interests of mankind. They mark new eras. They give life to future ages. They decide the fate of nations and continents, and have wrapped up within them the destinies of Humanity. I think I do not overstate the case when I say that an event, such as these, was the birth of this American nation. I delight to feel, that my country did not start on its career of life, without a great design of good for all the nations of the world, on the part of Him who gave its founders such wisdom to plan and such strength to execute. I delight to feel that on its course depend the most important interests of the race of man. I delight to feel that, under Providence, it has the greatest work to accomplish for the promotion of human civilization.

There can be then, as it seems to me, no better subject, upon which to occupy our thoughts for the brief period allotted to these exercises, than this, which I propose to consider, viz:

The Character and Influence of the American Civilization.

In discussing this subject I shall proceed to state what that character and influence were designed to be, and what they would be, were there no disturbing element to counteract their effects, and then inquire what that element is. "The real greatness of our institutions," as some one else has said, "does not consist in the forms under which we hold our liberties, but in the magnificent possibilities that underlie those forms, as their fundamental supports and conditions."

The birth of America and American ideas was no sudden thing. Centuries prepared for it. Events of unexampled importance were its preface. Magna Charta, wrung from England's tyrant John in 1215; the revolt of the human mind, headed by Martin Luther, Germany's best noble, because Germany's noblest man, ensured of success in 1521; these two were the preparatory steps for the founding of Plymouth Colony. And Plymouth Colony was the preparatory step for the Declaration of Independence. Was it by chance that Columbus found a New World, in that age, when Luther gave the Old World religious freedom? The adventurous navigator, as another has truly said, "sought the New World to complete the geography of the globe; God opened it to complete the destinies of Humanity." Was it by chance that this broad expanse of country, now the abode of Protestant Republicans, remained so long unsettled after its discovery — remained unsettled, indeed, till there were Protestant Republicans to settle it? Not till the principles of civil and religious freedom were absolutely sure of victory in Europe, and the contest of a century was decided in favor of liberty — not till the men could be found who were fitted to constitute a State, was this land permanently occupied for settlement. And then, by whom? Not by the subjects of Catholic Spain, searching for gold, but by the free men of Protestant England, fleeing from the oppression which, so contrary to the spirit of the English constitution, was binding them at home, and here, removed from the influence of old prejudices, and on a soil untouched by the burdens of feudalism, laying the corner stone of a Republic, whose name should

be the symbol of its nature. God-fearing men they were, and fully aware of the real worth of individual manhood. As they sat in council on the deck of the Mayflower, as she lay at anchor in Cape Cod Harbor, and, ere yet they landed, drew up the compact by which they were to be governed, did not an inspiration from the Being, whom they sought to worship in the freedom of their own consciences, give them power to work even better than they knew? Were they thinking then, that they were consummating a union between the two grand principles which were the soul of a new civilization, and that they were presiding over the birth of constitutional liberty for a whole continent? No thought of such a magnificent work may have crossed their minds. They came in the strength of simple duty. And the result of their action, did it only teach the world how wide the influence and how strong the power of duty is, would be a sufficient reward for all their toils. Yet, true it is, that

> "Souls destined to o'erleap the vulgar lot,
> And mould the world into the scheme of God,
> Have a fore-consciousness of their high doom."

The splendid scheme of future greatness may have risen before their eyes. Their charter, and the charters of the other colonies, reached from the Atlantic to the Pacific. That Pacific they had never seen, nor did they hope to see it. But doing their present duty, they left the results with God. Gov. Bradford ventured to indulge the hope — "that, as one small candle may light a thousand, so the light kindled here may, in some sort, shine even to the whole Nation." Who shall say, in contemplation of the fruition of that

hope, that some prescience of the vastness of their work did not find a lodgement in their minds?

A century and a half have gone by. The men of Plymouth have passed away. Yet all along the Atlantic sea-coast live Englishmen. Thirteen colonies have filled the narrow strip of shore-line with busy life. Hardy and courageous mariners, shrewd and enterprising traders, dwell securely in the sea-port towns. A manly and vigorous population, skilled alike in using the plough, and handling the musket, is scattered among the rural villages. The crack of the woodman's rifle is heard among the solitudes beyond the Alleghanies. The Indian wars have taught the colonists how to repel invasion. The pulpit has given them lessons of godly instruction, and nurtured them in a religious manhood. The school-house, now dotting every hill-side, has shown them how to think for themselves. The town meeting has instructed them in the political economy of self-government. The necessities of colonial life have told them of the power of productive industry. Provincial soldiers have taught British veterans the art of war, and saved British armies from destruction. Provincial divines have founded churches which acknowledge no bishop as their spiritual head. Provincial scholars have claimed for themselves and their colony respect and honor. And these things have been done, not by the help of a titled nobility, nor by the aid of rank and position and hereditary wealth, but by the simple force of a true manhood. What are titles, rank, position, on this virgin soil, and beneath this open sky? Let every man prove himself to be a man and let that be his nobility! To use one of our local phrases—

which has more meaning in it than at first sight appears — every man had to fight, till the ground, plough the sea, learn his letters, preach the Gospel, and live the Gospel "on his own hook!"

You may trace the whole line of colonial history, from what was done at Jamestown in 1607, through what was done at New York, Plymouth, Massachusetts Bay, Providence Plantations and along the Southern border; through the early Indian wars, and the later French wars; through the protests against the aggressions of the English government, till open hostilities broke out and the Revolution fairly commenced, and you will find this idea central, this peculiarly American idea, as the principle of the New World civilization, namely, the idea of the worth of individual manhood. The old civilization had it not. It was the very soul of the new civilization. It had grown with its growth, it had strengthened with its strength. Every colonist felt, or was soon made to feel, when he touched the shores of the New World, that his shackles had fallen off, that his limbs were free, that his mind and soul and heart and conscience were his own, that there was no bishop to rule his faith, no king to play the despot over him — that he was, in short, a man, and that he would now be judged and estimated at the value, not of his possessions in houses and lands and titles, but at the value of the manhood which he was able to carve out for himself. As an instance of the power of this principle in a single direction, consider how the battles of Lexington and of Bunker Hill were fought, both within the limits of our own county of Middlesex. Who were they that drove those British vet-

erans ten full miles or more on that warm April day? Massachusetts militia men, farmers, mechanics, working men, almost without organization, and led by no commander stronger than what was within their own hearts, the love of country, home, and a noble manhood. Who were they, that fortified Breed's Hill by breast-works, hastily thrown up in a single night, and a rampart made of rail-fences and new mown hay, and held these impromtu fortifications against the desperate assaults of British troops — nay, twice drove them back in confusion, and were only forced to retreat, when their own ammunition was exhausted? Who were they? The raw militia men of New England, who had been disciplined to depend upon themselves, and do their own work with all their might! It puts a wonderful courage into a man's heart, and a wonderful power into a man's hand, this idea of his inborn worth.

The Declaration of Independence was thus not a thing of a moment. It had been gradually growing up within the hearts of the whole people of the American colonies. The term the English gave them — "our subjects in the colonies"— they repudiated with scorn. They were not subjects. They were free men, who must be represented in the English Parliament, and when that representation was refused, they were prepared to have a Parliament of their own. This was why the Declaration of Independence was received so readily and with so much favor. "All men are created equal." It was but the expression of the thought that was in every one's mind. This was why the new form of government was assumed with so little internal convulsion, by all the colonies, and

unitedly sustained by them. Mr. Jefferson writes to Franklin, August 13, 1777: "With respect to the State of Virginia, in particular, the people seem to have laid aside the monarchical and taken up the republican government with as much ease as would have attended their throwing off an old, and putting on a new suit of clothes. Not a single throe has attended this important transformation." And what was true of Virginia was true of all the rest. Some writers are accustomed to liken the birth of this nation to Minerva springing fully armed from the head of Jove. It was not so. The truth was simply this — the people had been teaching themselves the principles of Republicanism for a century or more. When the time for action came, could the lessons of a hundred years be forgotten?

It is needless for me to say, that on this principle the war of the Revolution was carried through to its successful issue. On the battle fields of the country, not armies of men only, but principles came in conflict with each other. On the one side the principle of despotism; on the other, that of liberty. Could the result be doubtful? Even in the disasters of the period, God did not forsake the right. When the cause seemed gloomiest, there were rays of light shining through the overshadowing clouds. New York might be lost, Philadelphia might be in the hands of the enemy, Valley Forge might be the scene of unexampled suffering from hunger and cold, the retreat of the American army through New Jersey might be tracked by blood from the soldiers' naked feet. Yet while Washington was at the head, and the love of individual freedom in the heart, the event was not

doubtful. Trenton, Princeton and Monmouth made up the losses of former years. And when the drum beat the roll call at Yorktown for the reception of a conquered British Army, it was the principle, and not men, that triumphed. American bayonets not only thought, but felt, and wrote down upon the tablets, from which History made up its records, the American principle. It was the same afterwards. The Constitution embodied the American idea, and the Republic assumed its place in the family of nations, with this grand truth for the centre of its civilization, and the guide of its course — that man was free, and manhood was the power that made him free. True, I remember that there were individual exceptions to the statement which I have made. There were those in the nation, who still clung to the idea of a monarchy. There were some, who even desired to make Washington a king — and it is certain that no one deserved better to be a king than he. But in the hearts of the mass of the people, the idea lived and governed their life; and it is no less to the praise of the sagacity of Washington than of the purity of his patriotism, that he saw that it lived, and that the principle was of far more value than the gratification of personal ambition.

But, you say, why could not all this have been done in Europe? Why should a New World be required to work out this theory of national life? My answer to these questions is this. It has not even yet been done in Europe. And, the fact that it has been done only in the New World, is a proof that the New World was needed for the scene of its doing. I by no means forget that in Europe there were and

still are Republics. Greece, Rome, the Italian Republics of the middle ages, Switzerland, and the free cities of Germany, are not out of mind. I am not blind to the progress of constitutional freedom in Europe. In relation to these matters, this much only can I now say. Grecian republicanism was a republicanism of petty states, between which there was no strong bond of union, and no particular principle on which they could coalesce at all times, whether in peace or war. Roman republicanism bore almost entirely a municipal character. The former fell before the power of great states with which it came into collision. The latter rapidly sunk into obedience to the Empire. Italian republicanism, though similar to the Grecian, had by no means so powerful an element of life as its prototype. In the history of this republicanism, says M. Guizot, "we find the course of events, instead of aiding the progress of liberty, instead of enlarging the circle of institutions, tending to repress it; tending to concentrate power in the hands of a smaller number of individuals." Southern France also tried the experiment at one time, but the democratic element there was overborne by the feudal element of Northern France. Holland, once had its form of liberty, but even then it "was ruinously divided against itself." Poland has striven unsuccessfully for freedom, and lost its entire nationality in its defeat. In Switzerland, feudalism ranged itself on the side of the municipalities, and its influence has been very perceptibly felt upon the Swiss Republicanism, even to the present day. England, freest of all the European monarchies, is yet bound, to a very great extent, by the domination of the aristocracy.

One good result of the present war has been to show the utter incapacity of that domination, and thus to elevate the people, who have, in their private enterprise, vindicated their superiority. The progress of European constitutionalism (if I may be allowed to use the term) has been largely promoted by the influence of American republicanism. No, Fellow Citizens, I believe that a new world was needed for the grandest trial of republican principles, which History has ever recorded. And you and I thank God, today, that, when the New World was needed, the New World was ready!

The great principle of individualism, to have its full development, and its complete effect, must be tempered by some other principle. It is not simply individual liberty to be established, for that would soon run into the extreme of license, and unrestrained freedom would result in anarchy. So our civilization has a two-fold character. It does not express the liberty of the individual man alone, but also that liberty directed by the power of law, which all, or the greatest number, of individuals in the State agree together to create and support. If there is a centrifugal force, which, if uncontrolled, would dash the State in pieces, there is a centripetal force likewise, which neutralizes the evil effects of the other, and both combined unite in harmonious action for the good of the whole. And so it is constitutional liberty — liberty under law, which is the entire characteristic of our civilization. The compact of Plymouth Colony expresses it in its own terse and comprehensive language — "by virtue hereof to enact, constitute and frame such just and equal laws, ordinances, acts, con-

stitutions and offices from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the general good of the Colony, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience." The same idea is expressed in Robinson's letter to the Pilgrims on the eve of their departure — "Whereas you are to become a body politic, using civil government amongst yourselves, and are not furnished with any persons of special eminency above the rest, to be chosen into office of government, let your wisdom and godliness appear not only by choosing such persons as do entirely love and will diligently promote the common good, but also in yielding unto them all due honor and obedience in their lawful administrations. And this duty you may the more willingly and conscionably perform, because you are, at least for the present, to have only them for your ordinary governors, which yourselves shall make choice of for that work." That was but a new and briefer mode of expression of the same thing in the language of the Declaration of Independence — "Governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." And in the Preamble of the Constitution, the language is — not we the governors, or the officers, but — "We, the people of the United States, do ordain and establish this Constitution." So that it was settled at the beginning, as clearly as any thing of the kind could be settled, that American liberty was not to be that mad power, which, without restraints, hurries into license; not the right to overturn established governments in the rabid excitements of popular fury, but a calm, self-possessed, and self-possessing power, guided by sound and consonant

principles of justice, and having, as its source, the acknowledgement of human rights. All its restraints are self-imposed and so are all the more powerful. All its forces are from the consent of those who live under its sway, and so are all the more forceful. There is nothing mechanical, nothing derived from without. But it is, as it were, a complete system of dynamics, from the humblest citizen to the highest officer. Both alike are amenable to the laws which both have agreed to enact, execute and obey. And here is our security against usurpation. The Executive chief, even with an army at his back, in case he should try the experiment, would find himself weaker than a common policeman. The sheriff's wand of office would suffice to turn aside the bayonets of a regiment. And this is so, simply because the civil officer would represent the whole American people. Liberty under constitutional law then, not simply individual liberty, is the complete principle of the American civilization.

II. It is to be expected that the promulgation of such a theory of government will have a vast influence, not only upon those who adopt it as their own, but upon those outside of the boundary of the Nation. So I pass to the second division of my subject, and proceed to consider the influence of our civilization upon ourselves in the formation of our own institutions, and upon the nations of the world.

Institutions are the forms of ideas. They crystallize, as it were, around some central principles.—American institutions have crystallized around the American principle of individual freedom and individual worth. All things exist for the welfare of the

individual man — that is the proposition attempted to be proved by American life. Popular suffrage, popular education, a popular religion are but the results of American individualism. The Church must have no authoritative head but its own great Founder. Independence of spiritual authority, that form of Church government which we call Congregationalism, in which all the members stand on an equality, the pastor himself not above the humblest — that is the embodiment of the American Church. And it is to be very clearly seen, even by the most casual observer, that other forms of the Church, however different from this may be their expressions, are still in spirit nearly allied to it. Our Presbyterianism and our Episcopacy are still, in reality, Congregational. The churches assume the right to choose their own teachers. And there is no ecclesiastical body in the land that would dare deny to them the exercise of that right — *dare* — there is none that would *wish* to deny them. Even our Roman Catholicism,— that exotic plant which absolutely cannot flourish in our climate,— even our Roman Catholicism itself has been impregnated with the principle of individualism, and is fast losing its hold upon its subjects. When the fact is clear, that over a million of its members have been lost to the Roman Church within the last seven or eight years, in our country; when symptoms of revolt against the priesthood are rapidly showing themselves among the people; when the great principle of our civilization is every day becoming better and better understood, and its influence more and more strongly felt by even the most bigoted Catholic and the most ignorant foreigner, it seems to me, that we

have little to fear from a system of Church government, which is so utterly at variance with the spirit of the American people. If that poor old man at Rome, who presides over its destiny, can only retain his position among a people trained to subjection, by the help of foreign bayonets, there is but little cause to dread his influence among a people trained to independence. Let us have faith in the power of our own ideas, and not waste our strength in a vain contest with shadows.

Out of this idea comes our principle of Religious Toleration. Free churches among a free people must have free action. If men are created equal in rights, religious equality is one of those rights. Each man must be left to the freedom of his own conscience. It is for this, the fathers of New England left their native land. They came across the wintry sea, to find a country wherein they could worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. Shall their sons prove false to the principles, which the fathers proved true through exile and persecution and death? If religious freedom is good for us as a people, religious toleration must always be its companion, and he is no really true American who cannot grant to others the same toleration which he claims for himself.

Connected with the independence of the Church, and the religious education of the people in free churches, is the education of the people's children in Free Schools. To these we proudly point as American institutions of the highest order. And these grow legitimately from the principle of individual worth. The State exists for the man, and not the

man for the State. Given that, and the conclusion is at once arrived at, that the State must educate the men who are to control the State. And, as with us, that control is in the hands, not of a few, of a privileged class, but in the hands of all the people, education must be general, and freely within the reach of all. So we build the free school house by the side of the free church; we open wide its doors, and ask all to enter in. No one is excluded. The child of poverty, clad in rags it may be, is on a perfect equality with the child of wealth. As in the light of American civilization, there is no difference, so in the practice of American education there is no distinction. Not riches, not birth, not position, but merit, diligence, and the genius, which all the treasure and power of the world cannot buy, are the conditions of success. The highest prizes of scholarship are within the reach of the humblest pupil in our schools. I am very far from believing, that there are any of us who would wish this to be otherwise. With the generosity of our nature, when once it is directed to worthy objects, we freely give to all who wish the privilege, the opportunity for learning to be men. Education shall be free. No consideration of sect, no rule of caste, no narrowness of clanship, shall prevent it. Ingrained into the very being of American life, and associated with the grand eras of American history, it is part and parcel of our civilization, and we cannot separate it, without rending out the national heart. The free education of the people and the people's children — with that fully ensured, our republicanism can never be in danger.

The Freedom of the Press likewise grows out of the

main principle of our civilization. With us, where almost every hamlet has its newspaper, it is almost impossible to calculate the influence of a free press upon the character and condition of the people. A very important engine in the working of our national system, a real power in the popular education, while it is a natural product of our institutions, it is also fast assuming the place of an institution of itself. Would we have its freedom curbed? We are confessedly curbing our own; and though in many cases, its influence may be evil, the choice is very easily made by us, between a censorship of the press and its entire independence. It may be as M. de Tocqueville has said, that the press "constitutes a singular power, so strangely composed of good and evil, that it is at the same time indispensable to the existence of freedom, and nearly incompatible with the maintenance of public order;" yet who would wish, that the maintenance of order should be made to depend upon that action, which would restrain what was indispensable to the existence of freedom? There may be abuses of its power, but we can bear with these when we remember the priceless advantages which it offers. If despotism alone is the remedy of its abuses, while it must be the destruction of its advantages, we prefer the republicanism which will leave it unmuzzled and free. I rejoice to believe that in our midst there is power of character and principle sufficient to use it well. I rejoice to feel, that in God's good Providence, evil will at some time, nay, always does succumb to good, and so I hail the freedom of the press as one of the strongest safeguards of our liberty.

Popular Suffrage, too, is the product of our civili-

zation. Our theories demand that it should be made as widely universal among us, as is compatible with the continuance of our system of government. We have no rule now, but a term of years and sex. I am very free to say, that I consider character and intelligence the very first requisites for the exercise of the right of suffrage. It would, of course, be difficult in these, as in other matters, to say who should discriminate, or, perhaps most difficult to discriminate at all. It may be well that our system, as at present, should be so simple. Yet, who shall say that there is not an opportunity for a still simpler method, and that mature age and an understanding of our principles should be the only basis of the rule? I am glad that our suffrage is now so general and free. I could, by no means, favor an attempt in any way to limit that freedom. I do not think it can be limited in safety. I do not think our theories of national life can allow it to be limited. I would have every man feel, native born or foreign born, that he has a voice in the formation of the government. I would have him feel that he has a duty to perform, and a responsibility to bear, towards the country of his birth, or of his adoption, as a citizen and a man. Shall we be in danger therefore? I have more faith in the power of our national ideas and our national spirit, than to believe that there is any danger to be feared from such a course. The American idea and the American spirit are magnanimous and liberal. And though there are evils which we deplore in our system of suffrage, yet we believe that they are not necessary parts of that system, and furthermore, that they will not be cured by any narrow or illiberal course. Liberty itself has its evils, but the

only cure for them is — liberty. The right of suffrage may be abused; demagogueism may take advantage of the ignorant and the unwary; office-seeking politicians may secure by intrigue and unmanly compliance with the whims of the hour, their coveted positions. But, we will not therefore take away the right of suffrage altogether from any person; we will punish the demagogue rather than his victim; we will strike down the ambitious office-seeker, rather than proscribe those whose votes he strives for. Let us watch and wait. By the slow but sure process of the influence of our institutions our suffrage will be purified, and the time will come, when foreigner and native, black and white, shall look on one another, not with hostile, but with friendly eyes, and, hand in hand, work for the elevation of the State, they both are proud to call their own.

I delight to feel that my country is not alone a refuge, but a home, for the people of every nation, clime, and color. I rejoice in the manifestations of its power in assimilating them all to the theories of its life, and making of the most heterogeneous materials a common and united nation. I am glad to know that our civilization is not selfish and narrow, but generous and wide, and that its unquestioned influence is to make us a generous and, through our very generosity, a powerful people. I recall now those words of Patrick Henry:—"Encourage Emigration, encourage the husbandmen, the mechanics, the merchants of the Old World to come and settle in this world of promise; make it the home of the skilful, the industrious, and the happy, as well as the asylum of the distressed; fill up the measure of your population as speedily as you can by the means which Heaven has placed

in your power, and I venture to prophesy *there are those now living who will see this favored land among the most powerful on earth.* Yes, they will see her great in arts and arms, her golden harvests running over an immeasurable extent, her commerce penetrating the most distant seas, and her cannon silencing the vain boast of those who now affect to rule the waves."

While I glory in the fulfilment of the patriot's prediction, I rejoice in the adoption of that policy which made it sure. Yes, let the nations come, and find within the sheltering arm of our protection, that freedom which they have longed for, and will learn to love; that happiness which has been the goal of their efforts; that elevation of character, which shall be at once the product and the praise of our enlightened civilization! I delight to contemplate too, the idea of the sovereignty of the people. Not in the executive head of the nation, not in the cabinet, not in the congress, but among the people themselves, do we find our government. And, while I have faith in the intelligence, the good sense, the patriotism of the American people, I do not fear for the stability of the political institutions of the country.

I pass to the consideration of the influence of our civilization upon productive industry. "No people in the world," said De Tocqueville, twenty years ago, "has made such rapid progress in trade and manufactures as the Americans. They arrived but as yesterday on the territory which they inhabit, and they have already changed the whole order of nature for their own advantage. They have joined the Hudson with the Mississippi, and made the Atlantic Ocean communicate with the Gulf of Mexico, across a continent of more than five hundred leagues in extent, which sep-

arates the two seas. The longest railroads which have been constructed up to the present time are in America." Rapid as had been our material progress then, it is now still more rapid. With our agricultural products valued at $1,600,000,000; with our manufacturing, mining and mechanical products, valued at over $1,000,000,000; with our 4 1-2 millions tons of shipping; with our imports amounting to $270,000,000, and our exports to $230,000,000; with our 17,000 miles of railroad already open, and 12,000 miles in construction, very nearly as many as in all the rest of the world beside; with our 30,000 miles of telegraphic communication, to say nothing of our numerous canals and other internal improvements, I think, we can safely challenge comparison with any nation on the globe, in regard to the amount of work which is accomplished by our population. The very effect of our system of life is to make us industrious. All honest work with us is honorable, for the worth of each man's manhood gives honor to his labor. It is the idle man alone, that is in bad repute. We can safely let him go to Europe, and find in her aristocratic communities, that honor which is there given to idleness. But here, and this is worthy of our grateful remembrance now; here, amid our busy life, the stimulation of the intellect, and the direction of the mind to ways of labor; here, it is honest industry alone that claims and receives our regard. It is no wonder that an American yacht should prove the excellence of American shipping in European waters; that an American reaping machine should bear away the palm in the World's exhibition of agricultural inventions; or that an American discovery should work a world-

wide revolution in the ways of the world's travel. When there is free labor upon a free soil, a free head and a free heart to direct, and a free hand to do, we need have no fear of the result!

It is time that I should speak of the influence of our civilization upon the nations of the world. The work of America, in moulding anew the life of mankind, was early understood by the founders of the Republic. What Bradford said, I have already quoted. He was by no means alone, in the unconscious inspiration, which pointed to a future full of good to mankind, to be made real by the course of American history. He, it is true, with the men of his time, thought more of the religious influence which the planting of New England would exert, than of that political influence, which, in after times, was felt to be exercised by the life of the nation. It was left for the men who afterwards helped the Republic into existence, to discern the more extended power which it would enjoy in the world. We feel that both were not mistaken. The end has shown the justness of their thought. Such words as they used were words of prophecy. In the very Congress that passed the Declaration of Independence, there were those, who deeply felt the importance of the task which they had taken in hand, and understood the influence which it would exert, not only upon the state which they were founding, but also upon all the states of earth. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, in the course of the debate upon the subject of the declaration, said: "I know not whether there has ever been presented a deliberation more interesting or more important than this, which now engages our attention; whether we con-

sider the future destiny of this free and virtuous people, or that of our enemies themselves, who, notwithstanding their tyranny and the cruel war, are still our brethren, and descended from a common stock; or, finally, that of the other nations of the globe, whose eyes are intent upon this great spectacle, and who anticipate from our success more freedom for themselves, or from our defeat apprehend heavier chains and a severer bondage." Even before this time, while yet the contest was preparing, the American colonists seemed to have an idea of the greatness of the work which was before them. The people of Boston in 1772 declared, that the enumeration of the infringements upon their rights would "not fail to excite the attention of all,who consider themselves interested in the happiness and freedom of mankind." The Boston Committee of Correspondence — that body of men who contributed most of all in New England to kindle resistance to tyranny into the flame of revolution —"were encouraged" this same year "to trust in God, that a day was hastening on, when the efforts of the colonists would be crowned with success, and the present generation furnish an example of public virtue, worthy the imitation of all posterity." Samuel Adams, in 1774, anticipated that "Providence would erect into a mighty empire" the American colonies. "We have enlisted," said the Boston Committee, "in the cause of our country, and are resolved at all adventures to promote its welfare; should we succeed, our names will be held up by future generations with unfeigned plaudit." The same spirit was abroad among the patriots of the Revolution afterwards. Hear Franklin, writing from Paris to Samuel Cooper, May 1, 1777:

"All Europe is on our side of the question, as far as applause and good wishes can carry them. Those who live under arbitrary power do nevertheless approve of liberty and wish for it. They almost despair of recovering it in Europe; they read the translations of our separate colony constitutions with rapture. Hence it is a common observation here, that our cause is *the cause of all mankind*, and that we are fighting for their liberties in defending our own." Jefferson, writing to Madison from Paris in 1785, says: "the late proceedings in America have produced a wonderful sensation in England in our favor. There was an enthusiasm towards us all over Europe at the moment of the peace." After the adoption of the Constitution, Jefferson, in 1788, writes: "we can surely boast of having set the world a beautiful example of a government, formed by reason alone, and not by bloodshed." Even by Europeans themselves, the momentous character of the Revolution was understood. As early as 1768, when signs of resistance to England's oppression began to show themselves, the French statesman, Du Chatelet, speaking of the separation of the English colonies, declares, that "this new order of things will necessarily have the greatest influence on the whole political system of Europe." "As a citizen of the world," said Turgot in 1770, "I see with joy the approach of an event, which, more than all the books of the philosophers, will dissipate the phantom of a pretended exclusive commerce. I speak of the separation of the British colonies from their metropolis, which will soon be followed by that of all America from Europe. Then and not till then, will the discovery of that part of the world become for us truly use-

ful." Hutchinson in Massachusetts said at the same time: "We have many people who are enthusiasts, and believe they are contending for the cause of God." In our own day, when the results of our national life are beginning to be perceived, there is the feeling that those men spoke the truth, when they declared the greatness of the cause. "The spirit of human liberty and of free government," said Mr. Webster in 1832, "nurtured and grown into strength and beauty in America, has stretched its course into the midst of the nations. Like an emanation from Heaven, it has gone forth and it will not return void. It must change, it is fast changing the face of the earth." "As Rome," says Mr. Guyot, "wrought out the social work of antiquity, America seems called to do the same service for modern times, and to build up in the New World, the social state of which the Old world dreamed." "Henceforward," says a recent English Reviewer, "it is no longer England, but the North American Republic, that has become the pole-star to which, from all sides, the eye of struggling nations turns."

Do I err, then, fellow citizens, in the estimate which I place upon the power of that influence, which our Republic, its theory of Government, and its principles of civilization, have exerted and still exert upon the life of mankind? Is it not true that no event of modern history has had so wide an influence as that which raised into the position of a nation these united Colonies? When I recall to mind what has been accomplished among the nations since that event — when I remember the achievement of independence on the part of the Spanish Colonies of

America — the struggles in which the friends of liberty have been engaged upon the other side of the Ocean, I cannot but feel that their greatest hope of success has been excited by the contemplation of our success. If we speak of material good, we have but to think of the sails of our ships whitening every ocean of the globe, and our commerce extending to every people under heaven. China and Japan, the most exclusive of nations, open their capitals to our diplomacy and their ports to our trade. If we speak of social good, what better contribution can we make to society at large than the knowledge of our well ordered communities, the wide diffusion of intelligence among our people, and the general correctness of our public opinion? If we speak of political benefit, we can safely point to our representative system, our political equality, the great practical lessons of our self-government. If we speak of moral and religious influence, we need only to refer to the high standard of conduct, which is upheld among our varied population, and the zeal and energy of our benevolent operations. If we speak of a benefit conferred upon Humanity, we have to show the world how triumphantly we have pronounced our truth of human equality and individual worth. American power has made itself felt, American statesmanship has commanded admiration, American learning has received a willing homage. While, if the world shall ask for examples of public virtue and civic worth, we have to show, among a host of honored names, the inflexible patriot, Samuel Adams, the chivalrous and ardent lover of freedom, alas! too early slain, Joseph Warren, the wise and benevolent Franklin, the peerless WASHINGTON!

Let us believe, that we are performing a most important work among the nations. Let us think, not with pride, but with a deeper consciousness of our responsibility, that, for nearly a century, the eyes of men have been turned upon us with joy and hope. If, as Jefferson once said, "there is scarcely a good in European countries, which is not derived from the small fibres of republicanism existing among them," how much more of good must there be, when those small fibres have been strengthened into great powers by the influence of our national life! Yes, it is true, we are engaged in the "cause of all mankind." The welfare of millions is depending upon our fidelity to our ideas of government and civilization. Complete fidelity will give us an influence almost omnipotent. Teaching the nations this sublime lesson of human capacity for self-government,— this sublime lesson of liberty under law,— the nations will not be, as they have not been, slow to learn and apply it. And the struggling victims of European and Asiatic despotism will bless the day, that declared the North American colonies of Great Britain a free and independent state!

Fellow citizens: I would wish that I could rest here upon the grateful contemplation of my country's noble position. But justice, both to my subject, myself and to you, demands that, ere I close, I should ask you to consider the elements of barbarism that manifest themselves among us, poison the spirit of our civilization, sap the foundations of our power, and weaken everywhere our influence. If, as was urged with great ability, not many years since, by one of our best New England divines, "barbarism is our first danger," I feel that we are threatened with no greater

danger, than that barbarism which has grown into the direful system of Slavery. Were it not, that I felt, that this system was wholly outlawed, wholly alien to all our theories and all our principles of national life, wholly un-American and anti-Republican, it would have been very far from me to speak in such terms of exultation. We cannot but feel that this bane of our civilization is by no means a product of our republicanism, but is, by all means, antagonistic to it and destructive of it. The very opening sentence of the Declaration of Independence it denies. In contradistinction to it, it boldly affirms, that all men are not created equal. It refuses to allow, to at least three and-a-half millions of the governed, any voice whatever in the government. The worth of individual manhood it contemns as foolish and absurd. It makes its way, preserves its life, and extends its dominion, in the completest defiance to all the principles upon which law can be based. Against the laws of nature and against the laws of God, it arrays itself in deadliest conflict. There is not a single feature in the American civilization, with which it has affinity. There is not one of our institutions, which it does not stigmatize. With the whole spirit of our constitution, it is at variance. Not only what we have inherited from our ancestors, the trial by jury, and the right of habeas corpus, but what we have wrought for ourselves, the freedom of the Church, popular education, universal suffrage, the power of productive industry, it utterly destroys. A man is reduced to the condition of a thing, and God's child degraded into the character of property. The Church is under its base control. Free schools cannot exist under its

deadening influence. A free press it will not endure. Free suffrage is unknown. Labor is disgraceful, and the arm of industry is paralyzed. And the one great hindrance to the extent of our beneficial influence abroad is the existence of slavery at home. Even the course of justice is hindered, and the administration of law a failure. When I remember how it blights and withers all which it touches, and how it nullifies the power of the nation everywhere, by showing with how terrible a despotism our republican liberty can coalesce, I am forced to feel that it is not only a sin against a poor and despised race, but also against humanity and civilization — that it is not alone at enmity with American ideas of manhood and its worth but also with every good interest of the human race. I am ashamed to read in the writings of Englishmen, such words as these: "Republican America has elaborated a tyranny, such as no democracy, no aristocracy, no monarchy, no despotism ever perpetrated, or as far as we know, ever imagined;" and I am more ashamed, when I think how much truth there is in the remark. Is this the language of declamation? Can we forget the systematic cruelty with which the laws of the Slave States are framed, depriving millions of men of all the rights of manhood? Do we forget that refinement of cruelty, the most barbarous of enactments, making even the performance of Christian duty, criminal — the Fugitive Slave Law of the United States? Do we forget that there is one subject in the Church on which there is a perpetual ban? Do we forget, that a woman was imprisoned in Virginia, scarcely a year since, for teaching negro children to read the Bible? Do we forget the expulsion

from South Carolina of Massachusetts' honored representative, sent upon a lawful and peaceful mission? Do we forget that awful tragedy in Louisville, and yet another still, but a few short weeks ago, in Mississippi? Do we forget the destruction of the press, almost a common thing, if it but speaks of the rights of man? Have we not ample evidence, in what has been done in our Western Territories, in what has been attempted upon Cuba, in what has been threatened even beneath the very shadow of Bunker Hill, in the daily cruelties, in one form and another, which must necessarily be inflicted upon hundreds of helpless men, women and children all through the South, that in the midst of our civilization, there is this terrible and corrupting element of barbarism?

If there is an American citizen before me, who doubts the truth of what I have said, or is disposed to treat this matter lightly, let me call up before him the memory of the venerated dead, and bring to his recollection their recorded opinions. Benjamin Franklin petitioned the early Congress, to go to the extent of its Constitutional power, to abolish slavery in the country. In the colonial Assembly of Virginia in 1772, it was declared by such men as Patrick Henry and Richard Henry Lee, that the number of slaves "already in the colony gave them just cause to apprehend the most dangerous consequences. The interest of the country manifestly requires the total expulsion of them." They called the Slave Trade one of "great inhumanity;" they said that it retarded "the settlement of the colony with more useful inhabtants, and may in time have the most destructive influence." Jefferson, that great champion of Democ-

racy and equal rights, the author of the Declaration of Independence, early expressed his opposition to the system of slavery. In 1785, he declared that the emancipation of the slaves of Virginia was one of the great objects of his life. In 1786, he used the following language: "What an incomprehensible machine is man! Who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty, and the next moment be deaf to all those motives, whose power supported him in his trial, and inflict upon his fellow men a bondage, *one hour of which is fraught with more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose.*" And again the patriot sage utters his warning voice to the future: "With what execration should the statesman be loaded, who permitting one half of the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into enemies; destroys the morals of the one part, and the patriotism of the other. Indeed, I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice does not sleep forever. The Almighty has no attribute that can take side with us in such a contest." Across the ocean, come those words of him, who, in his generous youth, devoted his life to our cause, the brave Marquis de LaFayette: "While I am indulging in my views of American prospects and American liberty, it is mortifying to be told that in that very country, a large portion of the people are slaves. It is a dark spot on the face of the nation." Forth from the shades of Mount Vernon speaks the deep voice of Washington: "I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery;

but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by the legislative authority; and this, so far as my suffrage will go, shall not be wanting, * * * it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law." Sainted names in the American calendar! While their voices come to us over the long reach of history, to guide, to counsel, to warn, let mine be silent! Theirs to teach of liberty, ours to heed well the lesson!

Shall we then despair of the American civilization? No, fellow citizens; rather let us hope. Never was the power of liberty stronger; never did it call upon us with more encouraging tones, to be faithful evermore to the great ideas, in which the Republic had its origin. What, my brothers! Shall this great state, chosen by Providence to be the vindicator of the rights of human nature, sent into life to be the benefactor of mankind, forget its lofty mission, neglect its noble duty, and spend its energies — those energies which are to be exerted for the welfare of the race — in the degrading work of forging new fetters for the feeble and helpless negro slave? Forbid it, every generous emotion of the American heart! Forbid it, every high principle of American civilization! Forbid it, ye whose memory is our glorious birth-right, and whose spirits, even now, may be watching the course of our history with paternal solicitude! Forbid it, thou Great Father, in whose sight we are all one and brethren!

It is to us, fellow citizens, that this subject now appeals. Let us give heed to the appeal, and answer it, with a heart and mind and hand single to the welfare

of the land we love the best, remembering how that welfare will conduce to the benefit of all human life. Let no narrow or selfish policy turn our thoughts and acts away from the great duty, Heaven has imposed upon us. Let it be ours to help in pronouncing anew the principles of the Fathers, in making the Republic a power on the earth for the elevation and the ceaseless good of all mankind. Let the grand principles of our civilization have full and free course, and be applied in their complete power to the life of all men within our borders. Let us have faith—and work as though we had it—that the true instincts of the great American heart will yet vindicate themselves, remove the American reproach, and erase the foul blot which stains even now the American escutcheon! Let us have faith in the power of those great ideas of freedom, democracy, and human equality which, we are glad to know, are American ideas! Above all, let us have faith in the Providence of that Almighty Being, who watches over the affairs of human life with a Father's care, and permits no worthy effort for the good of his children to fail! That time will come, so let us believe, when this mighty empire, its boundaries filled with a free and enlightened people, enjoying the blessings of unalloyed liberty, and accomplished in all the arts of a really christian civilization, shall be indeed, as it was intended to be, the political hope and comfort of mankind — presenting, to the enraptured gaze of the world,

> "The vision of a Christian man,
> In virtue as in stature great,
> Embodied in a Christian State!"

ARY OF CO

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 011 801 723 7

LIBRARY OF
0 011 80

Hollin
pH 8.
Mill Run F

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 011 801 723 7

Hollinger
pH 8.5
Mill Run F3-1955